DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 029 335 CG 003 969

By-Warner, Tom, Ed.

Needed Concepts in Elementary Guidance.

Spons Agency-Ohio School Counselors Association.; Ohio State Dept. of Education, Columbus. Div. of Guidance and Testing.

Pub Date Jan 69

Note-32p.: Report of the Eighth Annual All Ohio Elementary School Guidance Conference, Dayton, Ohio, November 1, 1968

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.70

Descriptors-Administrator Attitudes, *Career Planning, Conference Reports, *Developmental Guidance, Developmental Programs, *Elementary School Counselors, *Elementary School Guidance, Elementary School Students, *Guidance Services, Vocational Development

School administrators and developmental guidance is the topic of the first speech. Developmental guidance, concerned with personalizing the educational experience, should be available to each child to gain self-understanding. Major responsibilities of the elementary guidance department are pupil appraisal, consultation, and developmental counseling. The administrator- his interests, his values, and his support- is crucial to the success of the program. Opening new vistas to children through career exploration is the subject of the second speech. Nine reasons are given which deal with the child's perception of himself, the world of work, and the future. Nine points are then made pertaining to how this exploration should be conducted. It should be active, relevant, exploratory, and non-graded. Career exploration should use available role models, starting with parents and moving outward to the larger society, with a minimum of amassing and digesting occupational information. (KP)

ED029335

Needed Concepts in Elementary School Guidance

REPORT OF THE EIGHTH ANNUAL
ALL OHIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE CONFERENCE

DAYTON, OHIO—NOVEMBER 1, 1968

Sponsored by:
Madison Township Local Schools
Ohio School Counselors Association
State Department of Education—
Division of Guidance and Testing

CG 003 969

NEEDED CONCEPTS IN ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE

Report of the Eighth Annual
All Ohio Elementary School Guidance Conference

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Edited by
Tom Warner

Martin Essex
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Published by
Division of Guidance and Testing
State Department of Education
751 Northwest Boulevard
Columbus, Ohio 43212

January 1969

FOREWORD

This report contains the two major addresses presented at the Eighth Annual All Ohio Elementary School Conference, held at Hara Arena near Dayton on November 1, 1968. The conference, jointly sponsored by the Madison Township School District, the Ohio School Counselors Association, and the Division of Guidance and Testing, State Department of Education, had as its theme, "Needed Concepts in Elementary Guidance."

Two nationally recognized authorities in elementary school guidance, Dr. Don Dinkmeyer of DePaul University and Dr. Richard Nelson of Purdue University, were featured speakers. Also, the host Madison Township Schools presented various aspects of their Title III PEG (Program for Elementary Guidance) Project to the approximately 600 participants through several discussion groups.

Mrs. Julia Tieman, Director of Elementary Guidance for the Madison Township Schools, served as conference chairman and coordinated the total program. This report of the conference proceedings was prepared and published by the Division of Guidance and Testing, State Department of Education. Mrs. Betty Baumann of the Guidance Services staff was the typist.

Charles E. Weaver

Charles E. Weaver
State Supervisor, Guidance Services
and Adviser
Eighth Annual All Ohio Elementary
School Guidance Conference

CEW:bb
January 1969

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Conference Planning Committee	ii
Conference Program	iii
"School Administrators and Developmental Guidance" Don Dinkmeyer	1
"Opening New Vistas to Children through Career Exploration" Richard Nelson	13
Discussion Groups	25

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

General Conference Chairman . . . . . Mrs. Julia D. Tieman

Registration Chairman . . . . . Eugene Lichty

Publicity . . . . . Mrs. Helen Barger

Recorder . . . . . Vann Smith

Decorations . . . . . Mrs. Roberta Allen

Adviser . . . . . Dr. Charles E. Weaver

Adviser . . . . . Tom Warner

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

PRESIDING

Mrs. Julia Tieman, Director, Title III, PEG

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

James H. Wooldridge, Superintendent, Madison Township Schools
Carl E. Noffsinger, Director, Curriculum and Instructional Services
Robert A. Spicer, Director, Pupil Personnel and Community Relations
Dr. Charles E. Weaver, Supervisor, Guidance Services Section, Division of Guidance and Testing, State Department of Education

ADDRESS

Introduction of speaker: Tom Warner, Division of Guidance and Testing
"School Administrators and Developmental Guidance"
Dr. Don Dinkmeyer, DePaul University

MUSIC

Trotwood Madison Elementary Orchestra Under the Direction of Ward Zerkle, Head of Music Department, Madison Township Schools

ADDRESS

Introduction of speaker: Jerrold D. Hopfengardner, Division of Guidance and Testing
"Opening New Vistas to Children through Career Exploration"
Dr. Richard Nelson, Purdue University

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Attendance Counselor: Ed Gantner, Dan Klips
Body Management: Helen Barger
Nurse: Bessie Stauffer, Francis Barnett
Psychologist: Keith Wiggins, Vann Smith
Social Worker: Roberta Allen, Margretta Lowrey
Speech and Hearing Therapist: Marion Pottschmidt, Shirley Huff
Principals: Don Stewart, Billy Sublett
Teachers: Clarinda Olinger, Elizabeth Lauderman, Joy Haas
Director: Julia Tieman, Carl Noffsinger

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE

Dr. Don Dinkmeyer
DePaul University

When I learned that I was coming to Ohio, my first thought related to the academic content of my presentation. After hearing the people who represent the local administrative staff I am really wondering about the need to bring in any outside people, because many of the things that I thought were most important to talk about have been covered. I was most pleased to hear the superintendent's comments concerning elementary guidance. Since I am not from Ohio I'm not talking about any of you here, but I have felt for years that what we have needed in the superintendencies are some people that have some kind of vision about what was happening and what needed to happen. To me it was most encouraging for a school administrator to recognize the inappropriateness of the beginning places of a guidance movement and suggest the kinds of things that need to be done. When plans for this conference were first discussed, we talked about seeing the relationship between school administrators and developmental guidance. Thus, I am pleased that there are so many school administrators here today.

Also I would certainly encourage you to take seriously the encouragement to contact your legislators. I think that people in the guidance movement frequently complain about lack of support, interest, etc., but they also do very little in what I would call a personal way to make contacts with the appropriate people. From conferences that I have had with people at the federal level, legislators are always very influenced by personal letters from people in their constituency. This is a kind of simple type of thing that might be done.

Some pupil personnel services in the elementary school have emphasized diagnostic evaluation and others have been concerned with remedial counseling for a few children. The kind of guidance that I am going to talk about today is guidance that is developmental; guidance that is concerned with assisting all pupils. It seems to me that developmental guidance is concerned with improving the learning environment of both the school and the home, so that learning can take on personal meaning. It is concerned with doing something about reconciling the uniqueness of the individual with the demands of society and culture. Guidance has often been thought of as sort of a chiropractic service, in that it is an adjustment kind of thing in which we see if we can fit the round pegs into the square holes the school has already developed. I am suggesting that maybe one of the tasks of the counselors to reconcile the school with the uniqueness of the child.

This theory of guidance, then, is concerned with the development of ego strength, and is not concerned with repair only. Its diagnostic focus is more concerned with assets and strengths, and what it is that the child can do. I think that a lot of pupil personnel specialists have been focusing in the wrong direction. They have been trying to find out what is wrong with children instead of what is right with them. So the intent of developmental guidance is to personalize and humanize the educational experience.

I think the people that are in the guidance realm need to see themselves in terms of their relationship to curriculum. The curriculum is concerned with the total learning experiences of a child; everything that goes on under the direction of the school. How does the guidance counselor fit into this picture? Well, it seems to me that guidance ought to be the specific planned effort of the school to meet individual needs and to provide for individual differences. It ought to be part of the guidance counselor's responsibility to do something about all the platitudes that are usually stated at educational meetings concerning the way in which we meet individual differences. He ought to serve as somebody who asks, "Where is our program going in connection with individual differences?" The counselor is concerned about helping provide educational experiences which are appropriate for each child's needs and rate of development. We frequently run schools as if all the people that were in the school were able to operate at the same rate. Youngsters that come into the school have different kinds of motors. Some of them operate like Volkswagons and Volvos and others operate like Cadillacs. When you give these different motored and motivated people the same kind of assignment the only thing that you are predicating is various kinds of rebellion, defiance, and passiveness.

Developmental guidance, then, is not an adjunctive office down at the end of the hall. Nor is it remedial; a service to take care of the problems that nobody can do anything about. Rather, it is an integral part of the educational process available in some way for all children.

It seems to me that if we are going to really get the kind of support we want in American education for elementary school guidance, we are going to have to do something to convince the people that we have not added specialists to take care of 10% of the school population. It is becoming increasingly apparent that voters are more and more resistant to certain kinds of tax support for education, unless they can see what it does to help each child. Now we are not suggesting at this point, then, that each child needs counseling, but we are suggesting that the

system ought to be designed so that each child has access to counselors. To state it in the way the children state it so clearly, the counselor is not for somebody who is "mental." The counselor is available as a resource; a resource to assist students to learn about themselves. Each child also should have exposure to a classroom guidance program. Developmental guidance, then, is an organized effort of the school to help the child develop his maximum potential.

Now a lot of schools say that they do this incidentally and the frequent ploy of certain administrators is, "All my teachers are counselors." I have never had the opportunity to visit one of those schools. I would like to go there and really see what is happening. I think it is an excellent concept, but it frequently breaks down in practice. I am suggesting that this approach functions best when there is a planned program which provides some kind of continuous assistance throughout the school experience. I am also suggesting that you have a broader clientele than the children, and that the clientele may include the teacher and the parent. To put it another way, let's assume you are an elementary counselor in a district where there are tax difficulties, and the teachers were told, "We have this amount of money, etc." and then were asked, "Do you think that the guidance counselor is giving you much help?" Would you have the support of the professional staff? It seems to me that an effective guidance program would find quick and ready support from the professional staff.

Why the sudden and increased interest in elementary guidance on a nationwide basis? Why the rapid expansion? I think a lot of it relates to a growing awareness of the crucial nature of the elementary school in relationship to the formation of the self concept. There is evidence that not only are the early grades crucial for the formulation of self concept, but also that the self concept seems to have a relationship to the achievement level of children. I am sure that a number of you are aware of the research by Kagan and Moss which indicated the importance of the years six to ten. In terms of attitudes toward school, for example, they found clearly that children who displayed intensive striving for mastery in the early years were likely to maintain this attitude. This is why, to me, it is such a futile effort, if you have limited tax dollars, to put all your efforts in trying to get certain kinds of youngsters into college. We know that the intensive striving towards mastery is influenced at a much earlier period in life.

Elementary school guidance has really developed its rationale from a number of studies related to self-concept and feelings

of adequacy. We could quote people like Coopersmith and Walsh, who have found, in essence, that when an adequate self-concept was established, a child usually performed more effectively in actual school achievement tests. Bruck and Bodwin found that deficiency in self-esteem may be the most significant determinant of underachievement. And, of course, in one of Combs' early studies he found what those of you who have been around the schools would predict; that children tend to come to the school feeling adequate as kindergartners and the longer they are in school the less adequate they feel. In other words, we seem to have a professional type of organization called the school, which among other things, beats out of children any kind of feeling of adequacy that they may have about themselves. It seems to me that one of the functions of the counselor is to monitor this kind of programming.

We have a lot of by-products that come from the schools, such as feelings of inadequacy, which we never advertise. And we have got some good reasons for not advertising. I am suggesting that, when intellectual ability is controlled, the self-concept becomes the basic causal factor in determining school achievement. I think one of the most interesting research studies along this line is the one by Wattenberg and Clifford, in which they noted in studying kindergartners that, in general, the measures of self-concept and the ratings of ego strength made at the beginning of kindergarten proved to be more predictive of reading achievement two years later than the measure of mental ability. I do not have anything against test companies, and if you want to have your children keep drawing all kinds of men, etc. to identify whether they are ready for things, go ahead. But, maybe we ought to also identify what is happening in terms of the ratings of self-concept and ego strength. Some of you are familiar with Rosenthal's Pygmalion in the Classroom. The studies which he cites point out that if teachers have certain negative beliefs about children then they treat them in such a way that they function much less adequately.

These are things that I think are within the province of the school counselor. The objectives of this program are to help the child develop increased understanding of himself and the relationship of his ability, interests, achievement, and opportunity; to promote some kind of an increased self direction and decision making by the child so he develops the ability to make choices himself and to understand his present and future problems; to develop some kind of sensitivity at the same time to the needs of others; and to instill the desire to cooperate

with others. As we look at the types of problems that seem to confront the world at this time, we need to ask, "What have we really done in the schools to develop people who understand themselves, and learn how to cooperate with others more effectively.

I am suggesting that the developmental guidance program would have certain areas that constituted major services that it would be providing. One would be in the area of pupil appraisal and child study; the early identification of abilities. Recently I had the opportunity to be with a specialist in learning disabilities. He seemed to be quite sure that in kindergarten we would be able to identify quite well a number of certain kinds of learning disabilities and prevent some of the things that presently occur in the schools. I would suggest also that we could collect information so that students would have a more realistic self evaluation as they progress through the schools. The idea that the child becomes some kind of a participant in the study of himself is certainly not new, but the practice of it is. If you start to look at schools who have large test records you immediately become impressed with two things. One is that they do not know why they have the test except that the other schools have it so it is modish or stylish. And, secondly, it is exciting if it is being used in the classroom in such a way to put numbers behind people. But I would suggest that we are a considerable distance from any kind of interpretation of data to help children to understand who they are, what they are, why they are, etc.; the kind of pupil appraisal that would move towards self appraisal. However, we have evidence in the research that this can be done at an early age and it can be influential on achievement.

The second responsibility of the elementary guidance department is in the area of consultation; collaborating with the teacher in facilitating the learning of the child. The counselor can be responsible for acquainting the teacher with guidance techniques. The counselor can be responsible for consultation in particular kinds of work with the teacher to help her understand an individual or work within the classroom. From my observations it is apparent that teachers need the kind of assistance that makes available educational psychology in action. There are also counselor-educators in the audience, and it seems to me that the universities need to do something about the development of programs that recognize the milieu in which the elementary counselor works. In other words, I think that we are moving past the time where we can treat the elementary counselor as an appendix to the counselor-education program; you know - suggesting an extra course, take child development, or any other kind of maneuvering which does not recognize

the realities of the functioning of the elementary counselor. We have talked for a number of years about the fact that the counselor is a consultant. We have read and written about this crucial role of the elementary counselor, but how many institutions even identify a course called, "Guidance Consulting?" I can give you the data on that, and it is rather pitiful. So we are saying, "These are things that are important for you to do, but find out about it after you're on the job in some way, or read a book."

Counseling should not necessarily be a restricted service in the elementary school to only handling remedial cases. There are several reasons for this. Most of the counselors do not have near the training of the psychiatrists or psychologists who work with those children, often unsuccessfully. Thus, our batting averages will be worse than theirs. This is what I would call a self defeating road to take if it becomes your only road. I am not suggesting you do not provide service to these children, but I am suggesting that there might also be available developmental counseling which emphasizes exploration and self understanding for all children.

I have really been encouraged and excited by some of the elementary counselors in Illinois who have taken some of these ideas seriously. It is always fascinating to write things and try to figure out if anybody reads them, but it is also most exciting to go to schools and have somebody say, "Hey, Don, I'm doing this group counseling with all the children in the third and fourth grades. I'm going to see all of them six times this year." When a counselor starts to do this, the difference in his role within the school, how children see him, etc. is immense, because he becomes part of the milieu and not somebody who sits over here to deal with the bad boys.

The classroom guidance program is an area where we need really major efforts. A teacher who provides a planned classroom guidance program is crucial to the success of the developmental program. A teacher needs to create a relationship which facilitates learning. He needs to identify guidance needs. He needs to create curricular experiences and do a number of things which we would call guidance procedures. Certainly those of you who are counselors know there is nothing done in teacher-education that acquaints the teacher with classroom guidance as a procedure. Many of the psychology courses only acquaint future teachers with the fact that children walk at the age of two and they do something else interesting at three. They do not acquaint them with the dynamic and developmental problems that may occur within the classroom. Maybe one of the things we need to do if we cannot get

cooperation from people teaching in those areas is to establish an area called, "Elementary School Guidance." This would be a class that all teachers would take so that there would be improved communication or awareness of guidance, and classroom guidance procedures.

Another area is the area of "Parent Consultation" and "Parent Education." This is the program that helps parents to understand parent-child relationships and to share with school personnel the needs and concerns they have regarding their children. Many of you are parents, and the kind of communication and help that you get as parents from the schools in relation to parent-child study is usually minimal. The summoning to the school of people for what is known as the parent-teacher conference is often more of a tragedy than anything that particularly excites the people there to give some kind of assistance. So it seems to me that the counselor's function might be to assist teachers in how to conduct parent conferences; to become more aware of interviewing procedures. We now have lots of dynamic media available for demonstrating this. This would be of value to teachers because there is usually nothing in the teacher's education that acquaints him with parent conferences. But over and above that, a valuable counselor contribution would be to make child study groups available to parents. This year, as part of an elementary guidance project in Deerfield, Illinois, the counselor is spending all of one morning per week with parent groups talking about, "Why Johnny does what he does, etc." The counselor focuses on normal kinds of problems with the hopes of eventually training these parents to be leaders of other groups. Then the counselor will move into the role of a supervisor related to child study in this district. The mothers have been very excited and have shown interest in an opportunity to discuss these kinds of things.

Professionals in education are often prone to make a lot of dogmatic pronouncements about how growth and learning are facilitated. We praise the counselor and the teacher as being important individuals, but in the final analysis I believe that the position of the school administrator has a major impact on the success of any program. That is why I am so pleased to see the number of administrators present at this conference. It is really extremely difficult to move ahead of your leadership. You cannot go past the person that is in charge. So it is the administrator that must provide both inspiration and a creative climate for learning. Developmental guidance, the kind of thing that we are talking about, can only occur with the endorsement and active support of the school administrator.

Now I am not suggesting that he has to think it up, but I am suggesting that maybe you counselors have to abandon your notion about what the boss thinks and what you are guessing he thinks, which only defends your rationale for not doing anything different. Maybe you need to go in and talk about guidance as something that facilitates the development of individuality. It is the administrator who has the power to experiment and to innovate. It is from him that we have to expect leadership. The administrator can create the climate which welcomes and encourages continuous re-evaluation of the educational process. He may supply new ideas himself, but he also needs to stimulate and reward creative thinking among the staff. It is the administrator who needs to be involved in continual assessment of the quality of the educational experience as it goes on in the individual school system. And it is he who must attack apathy, resistance to change, and indifference. In some school systems I have observed, it is the administrator who keeps apathy, and resistance to change, and indifference going, because he has finally arrived. He has waited a long time to get there, and the thing that he is most concerned about is that somebody might do something exciting that might shake his position.

The administrator, then, must become re-interested in the pursuit of excellence. He must call for continuous self-improvement. This is where I think the counselor can be an aid to the administrator in helping the administrator put into effect the kinds of programs he would be interested in implementing. Now, a number of administrators, and perhaps even some that are in our audience today, will say, "But you do not understand all the kinds of paper work that we have to do, all the red tape, all the bureaucracy, and all the forms that stand in the way of creative and innovative thought and action on our part. Don't you even know that we have to supervise milk count and the buses that do not run? We have all kinds of critical educational issues that are going on all the time, while you are thinking about all this theoretical stuff."

This brings us to the real core of the issue, and that is, "What is the value system of the administrator?" It seems to me that it takes a really mature leader to delegate certain details to assistants; to recognize that there are some things that secretaries can do. Since there is a difference between the secretary's salary and the administrator's salary, and since she is getting less, maybe she ought to handle some of the menial chores. I have observed some school administrators where I have worked who have a penchant for doing all kinds of things that are really tremendously insignificant.

Dr. Foster, a superintendent in California, in an address before the Nevada Personnel & Guidance Association, talked about the importance of developing an open system within the school; the open system of communication being characterized by mutual trust and concern on the part of all those involved in activity. Dr. Foster suggested that too many counselors see their roles in limited, minute ways. They see their roles as remedial counselors; they see their roles as people who sit in offices only working one to one. He suggested that this kind of activity may be self-defeating; that it may ultimately do little to influence the educational system. Foster suggested that the school counselor, ultimately might be concerned about the development of an atmosphere within the school which helps to facilitate the development of wholly functioning human beings, human beings aware of the possibility of choice, the various alternatives involved in choice, and capable of risk taking behavior. So the counselor becomes somebody programmed into the school system who helps the administrator in terms of this type of action.

This then suggests that in-service education might become an integral element in the life of the educational institution. It is not going to do the counselor a lot of good to complain about the fact that teachers do not understand children. What is the counselor doing about the development of in-service education? This is something that I suggest that the counselor and the administrator might work together with, in terms of initiating a developmental guidance program which is not a special service, but an integral part of the educational program.

Now the role and function of the school counselor has often been discussed; frequently, by groups such as this. It is as if it can be discussed only within the profession, and so counselors meet and they write up all kinds of laudatory and praiseworthy statements about their role and function. Then they go back and they recognize that there is the administrator. And he says, "Oh, I never thought of you that way. I thought of you as somebody who mails college transcripts." This has been one of the problems that the high school counselors had in the formulation of role. I think that it is essential that the personnel primarily responsible for the guidance program, the principal and the counselor, work together to communicate about, "What's the purpose of the program, what are the types of experiences which facilitate the accomplishment of this, what are the procedures, who has responsibility for the program, how do we support each other, and how do we involve and stimulate the total staff in doing the kind of

thing we are interested in doing?" The administrative guidelines and decisions are based on placing a premium on recognizing that the educational process is only effective when it reconciles the program with the uniqueness of individuals. Or, to state it in another way, who got the idea that just because there has been an expansion of knowledge that there has also been an expansion of the absorption power of children. You know, we are increasingly finding out more and more and more things, and we are acting as if we must cover all of them before the kids ever leave school, which is one of the better ways to turn people off. We are hoping that we will be able to push everything in possible, so that the mark of a sophisticated school system will be the number of high school subjects taught in the elementary school. The fact that at the same time you are getting lots of kids turned off, in terms of their interest in learning, in wanting to open books during the summer, in wanting to do anything related to this kind of "learning" is irrelevant. However, many people think that the purpose of the school is to introduce us to education so that we develop some kind of excitment related to education. The teacher then must possess certain guidance philosophies and competencies if the guidance program is to function. The emphasis, then, is on making the educational experience meaningful, so that the guidance program develops a continuous sequence of experiences which assist the child to meet his developmental tasks. It is only when the total staff becomes concerned about these things that this type of developmental program can occur.

So the school administrator then becomes crucial to the success of the developmental program. I really believe from observation of my own graduates, and from having the privilege to observe in other states, that the school administrator in many instances can make or break the program in terms of his philosophy. It is he who provides the counselor with leadership and personal support. It is he who decides the delegation of responsibility, who provides the physical facilities, the supplies, the nature of staff contacts. He is the one who supports or develops the formal or informal in-service program and type of schedule that permits counselors to see teachers sometimes besides immediately after breakfast or shortly before supper. In other words, he has the power to decide whether or not physical education can be scheduled in such a way that the counselor is available to the teacher at that time to go into the development of programs.

The counselor then can serve as a catalyst in stimulating the development of the entire staff. His primary role may involve counseling and consultation on guidance for classroom teachers,

but the counselor needs, also, a strategy for working most effectively within the total clientele. There is a very weak area, both in the conceptulization of those of us that are in the field, and in the conceptulization of the university personnel, and that is, "What is the strategy for bringing the kinds of things that we are talking about, developmental guidance, into action within a school?" If guidance is to become a process through which the educational experience takes on a personal meaning for the child it must be developmental.

It is apparent that elementary education has a real challenge, but at the same time it now has a procedure through which the purposes of education may be accomplished. However, if guidance for every child is to become a reality and not merely a slogan, and I am suspicious that it is a slogan in more places than it is a reality, it requires the full collaboration of principals and teachers.

OPENING NEW VISTAS TO CHILDREN THROUGH CAREER EXPLORATION

Dr. Richard C. Nelson
Purdue University

INTRODUCTION

It is my position that we are overlooking an exciting and fruitful area of consideration in elementary school guidance if we exclude career exploration from the program. This address is devoted to an examination of the Why's, the How's and the Who's of this area of consideration. While I make no pretense to originality in many aspects of this presentation, at the same time I take responsibility for it as one person's view, acknowledging in advance that not all persons interested in developments in elementary school guidance will agree with me.

While I continue to maintain the position that counseling is the first responsibility of the counselor and that consulting is a highly important supportive task, there is in the schedule of most counselors, and for that matter of most guidance-oriented teachers, a small amount of time which they can devote to developmental guidance activities. Career exploration can be a vital way in which this small allotment of guidance time can be used.

The primary objective of this address is to encourage you who are counselors or teachers to involve yourselves in career exploration in effective and vital ways without stinting on your counseling and consulting responsibilities. While I shall be pleased with your applause, if any, at the end of this effort, I should prefer that you evidence any enthusiasm you may feel by engaging in meaningful or more meaningful career exploratory experiences with children.

WHY EXPLORE CAREERS WITH CHILDREN?

Let me share with you nine reasons for which we might explore careers with elementary school children. These reasons are not all equal in weight, they overlap, and they are not all inclusive, but they may help to clarify why we explore careers with children. Also, they may inspire us to do this job more effectively.

<u>First, exploring careers helps children develop a personal sense of present and future worth</u>. Life tends to take on an "it-was-always-this-way and it-will-always-be-like-this" quality.

Children feel their inability to contribute to anything of value in their environment. Unlike his predecessors who were raised in rural environments, milking cows and tilling land with the adults about him, today's urban child, especially in lower socio-economic settings, has a less clear concept that he will ever be a responsible contributor within the adult world about him. Through guided career exploration it is possible for the child to develop a sense of his own potential and his worthwhileness in the present and in the future as a participant in the greater world.

Second, exploring careers helps children to develop a feeling of place in their society. As we look for ways to avoid racial strife, let us not overlook the importance of place-in-society as a highly significant component of that strife.

I'm beginning the process of writing an article on helping the disadvantaged, lower-socio-economic, more frequently the black child, to identify with the school setting. I'm writing this for "Issues and Dialogue" in the Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Journal. I may start out:

> Charlie Brown once reacted to Lucy by saying "the crabby little girls of today are the crabby old women of tomorrow." Let me hit it harder and make it more pertinent and maybe a little offensive. The child who doesn't fit in the school may be the rioter of tomorrow.
>
> How many kids are we missing? Martin Luther King had a dream; I'm afraid altogether too many elementary school teachers and counselors and principals don't have a dream. What can they be thinking when a child is subjected to continual failure, when the world he explores in the elementary school has so little relevance to the world that is of concern to him?

Perhaps you're in school districts where my remarks are inappropriate. I hope so. But I do feel very strongly that the rioters of tomorrow are not the kids who at the elementary school level begin to feel they have a potential place in our society. Many of them come to the elementary school without the feeling that they do have such a place. We need to give them the feeling that they have one. Perhaps no way of demonstrating this to children is more effective than in the area of exploring occupational information. Every day, in thousands of elementary schools

in our nation kids are learning who they are. Some of them are learning that they come from the right families, we expect things of them, we are pleased to have them around. And others are learning that life only tolerates them, that we don't have a concept of a place for them in our society, that we're clear in our thinking that they are not going to be the doctors and lawyers and teachers and policemen of tomorrow. And somehow we diminish them by conveying this attitude toward them. Exploring careers is no panacea for counteracting these attitudes, but it can be used to aid children to see themselves differently.

Third, exploring careers helps children see how adults achieve the place they have. Children look at adults at a point-in-time. They don't realize that the career pattern of an executive in a business may include his having filled eight previous positions, nor, is there realization of the helper-apprentice-journeyman sequence involved in such trades as that of bricklayer. Some tasks which seem distant and remote to the child can be comprehended as being within his range of possibilities if he understands the sequential development required for those tasks.

The consideration of the place of the individual suggests the matter of life style. It is important that occupations not be considered in a vacuum; therefore, the whole matter of life style--avocation, recreation, vocation, marriage and such eventualities as military service, peace, and war--need to be explored. While many may suggest that elementary school children are too young for such considerations, I do not. However, a good case can be made for examining the life style and pattern of a sampling of adults whether or not we answer in the affirmative to the question: Are children of elementary school age ready to consider their eventual personal life style?

I have heard Anna Meeks, now of Oregon State University, discuss a conference on aging which was held with retired and near retired persons a few years back. Concensus of that group was that the style of life adopted, and the leisure time pursuits which could be sustained, were largely developed early in the life of the individual. Thus, an examination of the present life style of the child may be an important consideration upon which his future life style may be based.

To carry this point further, Kagan and Moss (1962) have found through research that such aspects of the adult style of living as withdrawal from stressful situations, ease of anger

arousal, involvement in matters of intellect, anxiety in social interaction, and several others, tended to relate to preadolescent behavior.

Frankl (1963) suggests that all human beings are in search of meaning in their lives--though many accept substitutes. Goodman tells us: "If what we do is useful, we feel secure about being needed." (1962: p.22). Children are asking in many direct and subtle ways: Where am I going? How do I fit in? Will I make it? The exploration of the career patterns and life styles of adults can help children understand living as a process in which they are not merely chess pieces.

Fourth, exploring careers injects the elementary school into a meaningful ongoing process. In my dissertation (1962) research I interviewed and questioned nearly six-hundred students and found that children as early as third grade--the youngest group I contacted--were involved in a reasonably systematic and organized process of elimination of career possibilities. In my dissertation itself, an article reporting on it which appeared in Educational and Psychological Measurement (1963), and in a recent "Issues and Dialogue" column in Elementary School Guidance and Counseling (1968), I have attacked the idea that "fantasy" describes the process of career exploration at the elementary school level. On this issue I seem to be a voice crying in the wilderness, but I believe we are asking children the wrong question and inviting fantasy. In the second part of this paper I will suggest that career exploration avoid a choice orientation; but here let me state unequivocally that there is an ongoing process in which children relate themselves to nearly every occupation to which they are exposed; that they are alert to our "do-you-want-to-grow-up-to-be-a-garbage-collector" comments, as well as our respectful pauses as a doctor drives by; and that they are involved in a serious process of elimination of whole vistas of occupations, which, unfortunately, may be more a reflection of adult views and inadequate exposures than a matter of appropriateness for the children themselves.

Career exploration can be designed so as to get the elementary school helpfully and meaningfully involved in this process.

Fifth, exploring careers helps children see the value and significance of all honest work. Those who decry the existence of generation after generation in a single family subsisting on the dole of relief and welfare payments would do well to look to the elementary school as a place, perhaps the place, in which

respect for work could be developed. Instead of covering the voyages of exploration and discovery and the landing of the Pilgrims four times in the tenure of a child in the elementary school, examing the interrelationships and interdependencies of workers in our world could become a valuable means to demonstrate to him the significance of the most menial worker in creating conditions in which the most effective work can be carried on.

Sixth, exploring careers helps children develop enthusiasm about the whole prospect of work as a way of life. Here I have in mind the lower socio-economic segment of our population, primarily, who do not necessarily identify with work as a positive goal. Perhaps it is better stated that if they identify with work as a positive goal, they consider that they themselves have little capability to enter into the working work effectively.

> Super has said:
> ...work is a way of life, and...adequate vocational and personal adjustment are most likely to result when both the nature of the work itself and the way of life that goes with it (that is, the kind of community, home, leisure-time activities, friends, etc.) are congenial to the aptitudes, interests, and values of the person in question (1953, p. 189).

> Goodman tells us that:
> ...workmen are indifferent to the job because of its intrinsic nature: it does not enlist worthwhile capabilities, it is not "interesting"; it is not his, he is not "in" on it; the product is not really useful (1962, p. 21).

While this statement by Goodman offers a challenge to industry and to society as a whole, nonetheless the school can ill afford to ignore its potential in helping children to see work as beneficial and intrinsically or extrinsically rewarding.

Seventh, exploring careers helps counteract the physical and/or psychological absence of male working role models upon attitudes toward work. It is a present problem in our society that a great many boys, especially those growing up in lower socio-economic settings, have no male working role models and therefore are lacking in a concept of themselves as being potential wage earners within our society. Further, the elementary school itself as an institution is psychologically typed female,

so that what the school stands for may not have a counterbalancing force unless men are involved in the career exploration. More will be said on that as the HOW of career exploration is considered. Here, let me just reiterate that such exploration can help to counteract adult male absence and create the concept that work is "in."

Eighth, exploring careers helps children develop a concept of life as a reality extending through several interrelated-and-interdependent phases. Helen Schleman of the Dean of Women's Staff at Purdue refers to this concept as applied especially to women as the SPAN PLAN. The idea is that women should be considering their lives from a longer perspective than, "What do I do until I get married?" Dean Schleman has developed a chart which demonstrates very clearly that most women have their children in school by the time they're age 30 or 32, so there are some 30 or 35 years of productive employment which potentially lie ahead of the woman at the point that she has put her last child in elementary school. The basic concept that I want to pull out of this is that life needs to be looked at as a span rather than as a point in time for which a career decision has to be made. Even in the elementary school grades it seems important that this span-plan concept be developed with children. To have children be aware that there are entry jobs, that they lead with some degree of naturalness to jobs of a more enduring variety, and that even minimum wage honest work leads to certain economic and material satisfaction, is important.

Ninth, exploring careers with elementary school children is consistent with good learning theory. This last may be one of the strongest reasons. All educators are aware of the learning principle which suggests that learning proceeds best from the immediate to the distant, from the familiar to the unfamiliar. First and second grade teachers pursue the matter of school helpers and community helpers, then suddenly children are taken out of the sequence and flown backwards over time hundreds of thousands of years to examine the relevance of Massasoit, Francis Pizarro, or the Trojan Horse. And despite the protestation of those children who complain as they suffer through these same events for the fifth time in an eleventh grade history class, the sequence remains the same. Career exploration is more relevant to children and more justifiable in terms of learning theory than much that we do in health, science, social studies, English, spelling, and arithmetic.

HOW MAY CAREERS BE EXPLORED WITH CHILDREN?

Several reasons have been cited for exploring careers. Let

us now consider how this exploration may be conducted. Nine points are made and discussed.

First, effective career exploration is action oriented. Children are action oriented. Only in the elementary school do children sit with hands folded, talk in whispers, raise their hands, and walk in lines to get a drink of water, use the toilet, or enter or leave a building. Children are wondrously active otherwise. Many have almost unbounded energy, many could talk the Mona Lisa out of her secret, and many could play an active game almost from the time the sun comes up until it goes down. They sleep hard, eat hard, play hard, and some of them even take the drudgery they are given and work hard, though I'm not sure I know why.

It is perfectly possible for drudgery to be made of career exploration. Subsequent points, hopefully will further the discussion, but I'd like to state in clear and definite terms that I'd rather see career exploration overlooked then be textbookish. Let it be action oriented.

Second, effective career exploration emerges from questions important to children. An active discussion can be most effective in clarifying what children want to know about people, careers, and vocations. Children will often stress such things as economic rewards and the nature of the work itself, but if the outline is rechecked periodically, there is little reason to expect that a fairly comprehensive and relevant set of questions will not emerge. A developing list is probably far better than an infinitely extended class ordeal in which the teacher or counselor extracts all of the relevant questions that a writer in the field of career development would ask.

Third, effective career exploration at the elementary school level stresses wide ranging exploration and minimizes choice making. Friends, neighbors, aunts, uncles, and cousins ask children a question from the time they are pre-schoolers as to what job they will have when they are adults. "What are you going to be when you grow up?" In a way this seems like a meaningless exercise, almost harmful in some respects, because the child tends to learn to say something just to satisfy the curiosity seekers in his environment. Meaningless answers may, unfortunately, lead to meaningless commitments, and that is a responsibility which we must consider is to some extent ours. Nonetheless, there is a value even in such occupational expoloration with the pre-school and early school child, in that it conveys to him the notion that

jobs are important and that what he is likely to become does make a difference to the other people around him. So he comes to any venture into occupational exploration with a set that says, "Now, this is a pretty important kind of thing for me to have to deal with."

The elementary school does not, however, have to continue to perpetrate this somewhat meaningless, choice-oriented exercise. By providing a broad exploratory experience, by totally avoiding the choice concept, and by making the exploration exciting and meaningful, the elementary school teacher or counselor is providing a much more valuable experience than that which is solely or substantially choice oriented.

Fourth, effective career exploration is not given letter grades on report cards and evaluation is kept to an absolute minimum. Certainly at least once, perhaps four or five times in the elementary school life of a child, a six or eight week block of time can be devoted to an experience for its own sake. Call it social studies, encourage a good deal of speaking on the part of children and call it English, pin whatever label you desire on it, but don't pull up the seeds constantly to see how they are growing--don't let it go the way of all curricular matters and teach for a test and then assign a grade. Who knows, it might produce so much enjoyable learning that even mediocre students might like school for a little while. The kiss of death for excitement is often the little black grade book of the teacher. Principals are more flexible and open to possibilities than many of you think possible. Try them. Ask them if you can't skip a grading period and explore careers in social studies for eight weeks. More than half of you will find you can.

Fifth, effective career exploration starts with the jobs and positions held by parents of the children involved. The public relations value, the pride the child feels, the immediacy of the learning experience, the appropriateness to the eventual aspirations of children are all on the side of parental involvement in this area. He may be ungrammatical, his outfit may not fit the white collar, professional level, textbook image that defies the realities of our existence continually, but the plumber who feels the importance of explaining his tasks, his life style, his satisfactions, and his rewards to an open-mouthed group of fourth graders which includes his own beaming son, has received a reward beyond that which his job per se is ever likely to offer.

Perhaps this is a good point to pick up the consideration of providing working role models for children. Boys need to be exposed to men who are employed if they are to aspire to work. This exposure might include professional workers, but it should stress the breadth of our world of work. Girls need to be exposed to women in a wider range of occupations than the typical teacher, nurse, secretary range which stifles and limits thinking. Try a female doctor, taxi driver, office manager, gemologist, factory worker, etc. Black children need to see members of their race, both male and female, who are engaged in a variety of work activities. Try a Negro lawyer, parking lot attendant, accountant, skilled tradesman, etc. If parents can illustrate the range of occupations desired for a given group of children, well and good. If not, the resources are still out there. Parents can give and receive a great deal in such ventures, but the children are the greatest gainers. Classroom interviews can be invaluable aids to learning.

Sixth, effective career exploration expands outward from parents' jobs and from other jobs in the immediate vicinity to include jobs of relevance in the city, state, and nation. Even in this wider exploration every attempt must be made to create a viable, dynamic situation in which children can learn about occupation and careers. It would be far better to spend all of the time allotted on the jobs of persons in the immediate environment than to give a cursory, text-bookish survey to hundreds of jobs, thereby making them dull and lifeless. A second or third (or fourth or fifth) unit during the elementary school program can be relied upon to further extend the immediate to distant exploration of occupations for every child.

Seventh, effective career exploration brings children into meaningful contact with a variety of workers at their jobs. Occupational exploration is greatly enhanced by direct observation and communication with workers involved in their tasks. Thus, on-site visitations are extremely effective learning experiences in this area. In addition, there are other effective ways of bringing children into contact with workers. I can envision the excitment of a little elementary school boy or girl who brings back on a small type recorder a recording of an interview with a carpenter, or other worker, engaged in his occupational activity. And with the price of video-tape equipment down to fourteen or fifteen hundred dollars, I can envision a video-tape of such an interview being played to a wide-eyed audience of children. The unit we have in the Guidance Area at Purdue could easily be mounted on a dolly or hand carried and operated by a high school student, assisting a group of elementary school children.

Let me make a plea here that we do not try to store and re-use such tapes. Let each class, each year, feel the experience afresh. "He didn't ask what I wanted to know," may be the complaint; but really it is the lack of involvement at issue.

Eighth, effective career exploration relies more on occupational briefs prepared by children than upon commercial materials. There is no magic in preparing or utilizing occupational briefs, but I can envision the excitment of the culmination of a six week exploration into careers in which several children bring their hard-won information together and, collectively or individually, prepare short signed occupational briefs for distribution to other members of their class, and if more than one class is involved, of exchanging occupational briefs outside the classroom.

Ninth, effective career exploration is not overweighted in favor of amassing and digesting occupational information. Excitement is the watchword. Production is not--whether that production is in the form of memorization or notebooks or term papers.

I have mentioned nine ideas related to how one might or might not wish to engage in career exploration. This listing is certainly not exhaustive, nor is it intended to be. Hopefully it has stimulated you to consider ways in which you might engage children in meaningful dialogue relative to careers.

Let me turn for just a moment before I close this discussion to the consideration of the personnel who should handle this exploration.

WHO SHOULD CONDUCT CAREER EXPLORATION

My feeling here is that career exploration is basically a curricular responsibility rather than a counseling activity. I see the counselor serving as a stimulator and consultant to teachers in this area, but not, by and large, actually conducting the program. He might well engage in demonstration for an interested group of teachers, but he cannot counsel or consult while he is involved in career exploration.

There is no need for this to be a year-long project, and there is no need for every teacher no matter how disinterested to be involved in the program. It would be far better for teachers to exchange classes, one teaching arithmetic for a term

while the other handles a unit on careers. It would be better that two, three, or four grades be omitted from the program and that children be exposed to this kind of material in a way which builds upon previous learnings. Teachers who get "turned on" by such activity will find this a meaningful way to come into significant contact with children.

While my preference for teacher involvement is very clear to me, I would also consider it appropriate for any counselor, enthused about the potential of life style and career exploration, to engage in a limited amount of classroom activity along this line. He might, for example, work with one class at a time at a particular grade level for an hour or two a week over the period of a year. Certainly such counselor contact might be an important basis for building bridges both with teachers and children. I would hope, however, that the eventual outcome of such efforts on the part of the counselor would be effective teacher involvement in occupational exploration.

SUMMARY

I have discussed several reasons for career exploration and several ways in which I feel this exploration might be made meaningful. Let me leave you with these thoughts. Career exploration is a vital thing and should be kept vital. The attitudes that are developed, in the interests of our society and of our children, must be positive attitudes. If the process of exploration is action-oriented, broad-based, and stimulating, we will have made a valuable contribution to the lives of our children.

REFERENCES

1. Frankl, Viktor, Man's Search for Meaning. New York: Washington Square Press, 1963.

2. Goodman, Paul. Growing Up Absurd. New York: Random House, 1956.

3. Kagan, Jerome and Howard Moss. Birth to Maturity. New York: Wiley, 1962.

4. Nelson, Richard C. "Knowledge and Interests Concerning Sixteen Occupations..." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ohio University, Athens, 1962.

5. _____"Knowledge and Interests Concerning Sixteen Occupations...," Educational and Psychological Measurement, 23: 741-54, Winter, 1963.

6. _____ "The World of Work in the 'Fantasy Stage' of Development," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 2: 222-4, March, 1968.

7. Super, Donald E. "A Theory of Vocational Development," The American Psychologist, 8: 185-90, May, 1953.

DISCUSSION GROUP SUMMARIES

Following the two major presentations, the members of the Madison Township Title III (PEG) Project conducted a series of small group discussions concerning their roles in the total pupil personnel program.

ATTENDANCE COUNSELOR

1. The attendance counselor is more of a counselor than a truant officer or attendance officer.
2. He is interested not only in getting children back in school, but also in identifying and correcting causes of absenteeism.
3. The attendance counselor seldom works with children, but spends the majority of his time working with teachers and parents. Special emphasis is placed on getting parents to become more involved in their children's education.

BODY MANAGEMENT

1. The body management program is based on the premise that body coordination and hand-eye coordination are directly related to learning.
2. The work of the body management instructors is in the area of perceptual motor training.
3. The program consists of a developmental and systematic approach toward the involvement of the sensory-motor system of the body (sensory referring to the three senses of touch, feel, and sight; motor referring to body movement and coordination).

NURSE

1. Funds are available through the Title III Program for regular dental care, as well as for vision and hearing examinations and follow-ups.
2. Referrals to the nurse are made by parents, teachers, and other staff members, and are coordinated by the elementary counselor in each school.

3. The nurse periodically visits classrooms and conducts discussions on various health related topics.
4. Another aspect of the program involves parent group meetings, during which the nurse leads discussions, shows films, etc.

PSYCHOLOGIST

1. Emphasis is placed on preventative mental health, and the psychologist can obtain greatest success by working through the teachers.
2. Individual testing is kept to a minimum, and very little time is devoted to individual counseling by the psychologist.
3. In addition to individual child study, the psychologist is involved in classroom discussions at various grade levels, conducts study groups for both mothers and teachers, and provides consultative services to other members of the PEG staff.

SOCIAL WORKER

1. The primary function of the social worker is working with parents, both at school and through home visits.
2. The social worker initiates and coordinates the provision of clothing, lunches, glasses, etc. for students needing assistance.
3. Along with the nurse, the social worker conducts healthful living groups for parents.

SPEECH AND HEARING THERAPIST

1. In response to the frequent teacher comment that children do not know how to learn by listening, an effort was made to develop an innovative approach to speech and hearing therapy.
2. The program emphasizes the philosophy that success in school involves the ability to communicate orally as well as to read and write.
3. The program includes working with primary grade students in an organized listening skills program.
4. More emphasis is placed on encouragement and meaning than on correct grammar.

PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

1. In these two groups, two principals and three teachers discussed the role of the elementary counselor as the one member of the PEG team assigned full time to each elementary school.
2. Details were provided on the coordinator responsibility of the counselor and of the cooperation of the various members of the PEG team. Several examples were cited which demonstrated how the services of the team have been of assistance to students and staff.

DIRECTOR

1. PEG (Program for Elementary Guidance) is a Title III ESEA project which provides comprehensive services to the elementary students in the Madison Township School District.
2. A two-week workshop was provided for all members of the PEG staff prior to the first year of operation.
3. The counselor serves as the hub of the team activities in each school, but there is some variation in the role of the counselors among the various schools.
4. The PEG program has had an effect on the total school district, and has resulted in curriculum revision and other innovative action.